

# **The Association of the Miraculous Medal**

## **A Sharing for the General Assembly of the Congregation of the Mission**

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### **The Specific Identity of the Association of the Miraculous Medal**

I will assume that this group is familiar with the story of the Miraculous Medal. An Association of the Holy Medal of the Immaculate Conception was begun in Paris and approved for Paris by the Holy See in 1847. Worldwide approval came on July 8, 1909, and revised international statutes were approved in 1998. Anyone who wears a blessed Miraculous Medal is a member of this international Association.

The Association which I lead, a part of the international Association, brings Mary conceived without sin to the Catholics of North America. There are over 2,250,000 registered members and 60,000 promoters who spread the devotion by enrolling members. About 350,000 people around the United States regularly receive our literature with its devotional and educational contents. We were established in 1918 with 25¢ a year as the membership donation (\$10 for perpetual membership), and the amount is the same today, 80 years later. It is the best bargain in Christendom.

### **The Relationship of the Association with the other members of the Vincentian Family: Experiences and Hopes about Collaboration**

The basis in principle for a relationship between the Association of the Holy Medal and the Vincentian Family is that the Association is entrusted to our Superior General as its Director General. The practical relationship of the Association with the Vincentian Family depends very much on the country in which it operates formally. In the six national associations I am familiar with, the national director is a confrere who instills in the association the spirit of Vincent. In three cases there are annual national gatherings of members or of local *asesorers* for instruction and prayer. And in Mexico the Association is involved in one of the model collaborative Vincentian Family projects. There is also a long-standing relationship between the Association and the Vincentian Marian Youth (JMV).

Here is one example of collaboration involving my own Association. In the western United States, the Association is a major support for the operation of the Congregation. Annually we give over \$2,000,000 to the province and the worldwide missions of the Congregation. We also place our resources, especially in the area of communication, at the service of the province and its ministries.

Is there more? I dream of bringing the large, widely scattered membership of the Association into active service of the poor and of the gospel wherever they are. I want them to hear Mary's message for what it is, the intervention of God in the world today with its own poor, hungry for a purpose in life but not knowing where to look for it.

### **The Three Most Important Challenges the Association Is Facing in the Third Millennium**

The sheer size of the Association makes it potentially a formidable force for realizing the vision of St. Vincent.

1. The Association must become more widely known in the Congregation as a vehicle for evangelization and service of the poor.
2. The message of the Miraculous Medal must be translated into the language of the next generation, a generation that has lost its faith or never received it, a generation in a society no longer Christian.
3. The message of the Miraculous Medal must be communicated to the widest possible audience in a way that engages them in the gospel and active charity to the most abandoned.